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The Fruits of Victory

HAVE OUR STATESMEN
WON THE PEACE OUR
SOLDIERS FOUGHT FOR?

*"We shall neither accept nor impose
on our foes a Brest-Litovsk Treaty."*

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE,
Nov. 12, 1918.

By
E. D. MOREL.

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THE FRUITS OF VICTORY.

By E. D. MOREL.

"Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor's terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation under duress, at intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory upon which terms of peace would rest, not permanently, but only as upon a quicksand."—President Wilson, January 22, 1917.

"Germany has occupied a great position in the world. It is not our wish or intention to question or to destroy that position, but rather to turn her aside from hopes and schemes of military domination, and to see her devote all her strength to the great beneficent tasks of the world . . . Our point of view is that the adoption of a really democratic Constitution by Germany would be the most convincing evidence that in her the old spirit of military domination had, indeed, died in the War, and would make it much easier for us to conclude a broad, democratic peace with her."—Mr. Lloyd George to delegates of the Trades Union Congress, January 18, 1918.

"We must not arm Germany with a real wrong. In other words we shall neither accept nor impose on our foes a Brest-Litovsk Treaty."—Mr. Lloyd George, November 12, 1918.

"We have made a peace, but it is not *the* Peace."—Clarendon, 1856.

The Peace Treaty which has at length emerged from the secret conclave at Versailles is at once a great personal tragedy and a great international tragedy. It is a great personal tragedy because it unveils President Wilson, in whom the aspirations of the common people everywhere were centred, as a complete and tragic failure—an empty rhetorician. It is a great international tragedy because it dooms the world to a further prolonged period of strife and leaves mankind, if not without hope, at least without confidence in the future.

For this is only the beginning. It is only the first, although the most poisonous, of "Victory's" fruits. The spirit responsible for the nature of the terms presented to the German plenipotentiaries, is producing further fruits equally putrid in the mouth. It is visibly at work in the attempt to crush the Socialist

Republic in Hungary which has committed no act of aggression against the Allies, whose sole crime is that of being a Socialist Republic; in the conditions to be forced upon "Austria"—German Austria—conditions almost grotesque, so amazingly do they ignore the elementary economic and human needs of the Austro-Germans; in the virtual interdiction laid upon German Austria fusing politically with Germany; in the arrangement for placing two million Tyrolese Austrians, and as many Dalmatian Slavs under Italian domination; in the sanguinary and vicious folly which makes of ephemeral Polish adventurers the agents of Allied—notably French—capitalistic finance in Eastern Galicia; in the incoherently vindictive persecution of Soviet Russia; in the callous cynicism with which whole nations are being bartered and sold throughout Asiatic Turkey. *This* was the "Victory" some of us dreaded when we saw our gallant lads file past on their way to the Hell prepared for them by the statesmen: not the victory they dreamed of, victory over war and over militarism, but the "Victory" which those who drove them to the Hell, and those who in other lands were driving equally gallant lads to contend with them in deadly strife, were calculating and planning for—the "Victory" of which the Author of these lines wrote in an Epilogue to the Belligerent Governments in 1916:—

"The 'Victory' you seek is a victory which shall perpetuate your empire over mankind; keep humanity bound in fetters to your cruel and senseless systems; maintain your castes and your monopolies; strengthen your embargo upon the people's liberties; leave your heel firmly planted on the peoples' necks . . . Thus your notion of 'Victory' means for the peoples increased poverty and a renewal of fears and hatreds upon which you have thriven, by which you retain them in subjection to your will and through which they perish. For the peoples, *your* 'Victory' means Death."*

This Treaty which is to be imposed upon Germany at the point of the bayonet, as the alternative to a massacre by the slow processes of starvation and disease of further multitudes of German men, women, and children, is a document of unspeakable sadness. It is *that* first and foremost, for its revelation of human futility, of human unteachableness; of the depth, and power, and blindness of hatred in human affairs. For the deliberate purpose of the Treaty, a purpose disclosed in every section of it, is that of encompassing the utter ruin of a great people. That purpose may or may not be feasible of accomplishment. It has been attempted before; sometimes it has failed, sometimes it has succeeded. But whether it has failed or succeeded, it has never brought Peace to the world. And it cannot bring Peace, now that it is contemplated on a scale of unprecedented comprehensiveness. Indeed so little do those responsible for it imagine it can or will, that the professional soldiers are already bidding humanity prepare to tread once

* "Truth and the War" (National Labour Press).

more its *via dolorosa*,* and the professional diplomatists are already working out fresh combinations in the game of the "balance of power."†

Let us examine the chief measures for which this Treaty provides, in order that we may fully understand the outrage, not upon the German people alone, but upon mankind, which is intended.

I.—VIOLATION OF NATIONAL RIGHT.

A—The Rape of Eastern Germany.

"The settlement of every question . . . upon the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interests or advantage of any other nation or people which may desire a different settlement for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery."—One of the Four objects specified by President Wilson as embodying American aims in the War, July 4, 1918.

"No peace can last, or ought to last, which does not recognise . . . that no right anywhere exists to hand peoples about . . . as if they were property."—President Wilson, January 22, 1917.

"We are not fighting a war of aggression against the German people . . . the destruction or disruption of Germany or the German people has never been a war aim with us, from the first day of this war to this day. . . . The British people have never aimed at the break up of the German people or the disintegration of their State or country."—Mr. Lloyd George to the delegates at the Trades Union Congress, January 18, 1918.

Virtually the whole of the Provinces of West Prussia and of Posen, and a portion of Silesia, are to be taken from Germany and incorporated in the new Polish State. This has the double effect of wrenching a large German population from its parent State, and of cutting off the Province of East Prussia altogether from Germany. Moreover the north-east corner of East Prussia, Memel—the old historic town, refuge of Queen Louise of Prussia from Bonaparte—and neighbourhood, is definitely taken from Germany, not by Poland, but by the Associated Powers! A really astounding act of robbery, this!

The character of the general proceeding may be estimated from the following facts:—

The Province of West Prussia is divided into two main districts,

* See Sir Douglas Haig's rectorial address at St. Andrew's University (May 14): "The seeds of future conflict are to be found in every quarter of the globe, only awaiting the right condition, moral, political, and economic, to burst once more into activity, etc." See also Marshall Foch's interview in a recent issue of the "Daily Mail."

† e.g. England and America are to guarantee France against future attacks by Germany!

Danzig and Marienwerder. The total population is 1,703,474—1,097,943 are Germans, 475,853 are registered as Poles, but 80,000 are Kassubians, a Slav people who, while still preserving their own language, now speak Polish or German, or both. The percentage of Poles (including Kassubians) in the Danzig district is 13.9 per cent., in the Marienwerder district 38.9 per cent.; the percentage of Poles for the whole Province is 27.9. *Thus a German Province with a German population of over a million, forming more than 72 per cent. of the whole population of the Province, is handed over to Poland.* Danzig, the most typically Prussian of all Prussian cities, is to be made into a "free City," under the Polish customs system, with Poland in control of the navigation of the river, and of the railway system within the city's boundaries!

The Province of Posen is divided into two main districts, Posen and Bromberg. The total population is 2,099,831—806,720 are German, 1,278,890 Polish-speaking. The percentage of Poles in the Posen district is 67.4, in the Bromberg district 49.6—the percentage of Poles for the whole Province is 60.9. Here evidently is a situation which, on the basis of an international settlement based upon the principle of nationality, required a most careful and impartial investigation in order to arrive at a solution, just at once to "Poland" and to "Germany"—just above all to the peoples affected. Such investigation would have revealed that even in the Posen district there was a German minority of 23 per cent. entitled to the right of "self-determination"; that in the Bromberg district of this most Polish of all the German Provinces, there is an actual German majority, and an increasing one too, for the proportion of Polish-speaking population in that district decreased from 50.9 per cent. in 1900 to 50.4 per cent. in 1905, and to 49.6 per cent.—the last census figure—in 1910. Moreover, despite the "plantation" system—adopted by the German Government in the Polish districts of East Prussia, as by the English Government in the North of Ireland—the presence of a large German-speaking population in Posen is an old historical fact, the German population mustering between 300,000 and 400,000 against 600,000 Poles at the time of the last Polish partition. Indeed the west and north of the Province are in the main half German, and it is only the eastern belt which is essentially Polish. *Notwithstanding these facts the German population is placed at the disposal, like so much cattle,* of M. Paderewski and his friends, whose rule in other parts of Poland has been chiefly distinguished hitherto by a merry series of Jewish pogroms.

It is difficult, without the original maps attached to the Treaty, to judge of the *exact* boundaries of the portion of Upper Silesia made over to Poland, which was never historically Polish. But it is clear that it includes the district of Oppeln in which the Polish-speaking population is only a very small majority, viz.: 52.9 per cent. of the whole; the total population of this district being:

2,207,981, of whom 1,169,340 are Polish-speaking and 884,045 German.*

As for East Prussia it is, of course, overwhelmingly German, even the district of Allenstein (which, with the perfection of hypocrisy, is marked out for a *plebiscite under the control of Germany's enemies*) only containing 13.5 per cent. of Polish-speaking people. In the other two districts into which the Provinces are divided—Konigsberg and Gumbinnen—the Polish-speaking population is less than 1 per cent. The total population of East Prussia is 2,064,175—German, 1,680,003; Polish-speaking, 81,147; Polish-speaking percentage for the whole province 3.9. Memel and district, appropriated by the Allies as stated above, is in the province of Konigsberg which contains 874,410 Germans and 2,820 Poles!

To summarise: †

In the province of West Prussia, over a million Germans are torn from Germany and incorporated into Poland although over 72 per cent. of the population of the province is German. In the province of Posen 800,000 Germans are torn from Germany and incorporated into Poland although actually in a majority—and a growing majority—in one out of two districts into which the province is divided, and although forming 33 per cent. of the population of the other district. In the province of Silesia nearly 900,000 Germans are torn from Germany and incorporated into Poland, although they form more than 47 per cent. of the population of the district thus dealt with.* In the province of East Prussia 1,680,000 Germans are territorially severed from the German State by the interposition between them and Germany of Polish territory, and about 20,000 or 30,000 of that total are calmly claimed by the Allied and Associated Powers.

Thus does the principle of nationality and the right of self-determination triumph at the hands of the wreckers of Versailles, so far as the eastern Provinces of Germany are concerned! Thus does President Wilson stand forth as the supreme iconoclast of the image of an enduring Peace which he raised before the uplifted eyes of a stricken humanity.

B—Virtual Annexation of the Saar Basin.

“What will have to be guaranteed first of all by the conditions of peace? That they should be formed upon so equitable a basis that nations will not wish to disturb them.”

—Mr. Lloyd George, April 6, 1917.

The purely German population of the Saar Basin is to be governed by a Commission in whose appointment Germany—not

* Under the amended Treaty, a *plebiscite* is to be allowed. In the remainder of the Province the Polish-speaking population is in an infinitesimal minority (2.8 per cent. in the Breslau district and 1.3 per cent. in the Liegnitz district).

† The reader should note that we have only the summarised version of the Treaty before us. Those who have seen the original (unprocureable at time of writing) declare that it contains many additional impositions which do not figure in the summary.

being a member of the League—has no voice; the people of the Saar Basin only have one representative on the Commission out of five members. This Commission will rule the country, taking over the railroads and public services. The Courts will be subject to the Commission; the Commission may even modify existing laws through an organisation which it will itself create and which can impose new taxes. The people are cut off politically from the parent State. French and other labour may be brought in. French money will be introduced and the territory will be incorporated within the French Customs Union. The French will run the schools. After fifteen years of this process of gallicisation, a plébiscite will be taken! Note that there is nothing to prevent the French within this period of time from flooding the country with French, Polish, or any other labour, thus gradually displacing the German population.

The process of French "assimilation" has already started, it would seem, many prominent inhabitants of Saarlouis having been expelled.

C—Belgian Annexations.

"Peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from Sovereignty to Sovereignty, as if they were chattels and pawns in a game. . . ."—President Wilson, February 11, 1918.

The partially German population of Moresnet, and the partially German population of Eupen and Malmédy is placed under Belgian sovereignty. After six months of Belgian occupation, the two latter districts are to be "entitled to protest" against it! This, of course, is a purely strategic move, having in view potential military operations at a future date.

D—Alsace-Lorraine.

"The fatal error committed by Prussia in 1870 was that when she entered the war she was fighting against a restless military Empire dominated largely by military ideals, with military traditions behind them. When that Empire fell, it would have been wisdom for Germany to have recognised the change immediately. *Democratic France, was a more sure guarantee for the peace of Germany than the fortress of Metz or the walled ramparts of Strasburg.* If Prussia had taken that view, European history would have taken a different course. . . . *It would have reacted on the spirit and policy of Germany herself.* Europe would have reaped a harvest of peace and goodwill among men instead of garnering as she does now a whirlwind of hate, rage, and human savagery. *I trust that the Allied Governments will take this as an element in their whole discussion of the terms and prospects of peace.*"—Mr. Lloyd George, July 1, 1917.

The people of Alsace-Lorraine change hands once more in their chequered history. And, once again, through the instrumentality

of a triumphant militarism. The injustice of 1871 is repeated. An old sore in the international body which was in process of healing when the war broke out is re-opened. It will continue to suppurate. It is beginning to now. Political evictions and expropriations are already the order of the day. The morality of the "Big Four" is on a par with that of Louis XIV. and of the Prussian General Staff. We can say of it, as Mr. Lloyd George said of German action in 1871: "There can be no better illustration of the folly and wickedness of using a transient military success to violate national right." Misery and suffering are once again inflicted upon tens of thousands of people in these provinces and the seeds of hatred sown with lavish hands

II.—ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL STRANGULATION.

A—What is Taken from Germany in Europe.

We must have men rallying to the flag imbued with the idea that they are going forth in a holy war.—Mr. Lloyd George, September 29, 1914.

As the Lord liveth we had entered into no conspiracy against Germany. We were not envying her territory. We sought not a yard of her Colonies. We are in this war from motives of purest chivalry, to defend the weak.—Mr. Lloyd George, November 10, 1914.

I know it is part of the German policy to represent our intervention as a calculated move of selfish craft to capture the trade and shipping of a dangerous rival and to annex her colonies.—Mr. Lloyd George, February 27, 1915.

A great German newspaper said the other day that the Germans were fighting for the freedom and independence of their fatherland. It was never true. It is less true to-day than it ever was. The freer Germany is, the more independent Germany is, the better we like it. . . . We can make peace with a free Germany.—Mr. Lloyd George, July 22, 1917.

The impartial justice meted out must involve no discrimination between those to whom we wish to be just and those to whom we do not wish to be just. It must be a justice that knows no frontiers and knows no standards but the equal rights of the several peoples concerned.—President Wilson, September 27, 1918.

Between one-third and one-half of Germany's coal mines, with the seizure of the Saar Basin and Upper Silesia.*

Two-thirds of the iron mines, with the seizure of Lorraine;

All ships above 1,600 tons burthen; one-half of her ships between 1,600 and 1,000 tons burthen; one quarter of her fishing fleet;

* See foot-note, page 7.

“ A proportion ” of the shipping, tugs, and material used on her own internal waterways; and, to France, “ a proportion of tugs and shipping from the Rhine harbours, or shares in German navigation companies;

“ A proportion ” of buildings, tugs, etc., owned by Germans in Rotterdam or the equivalent in shares (presumably to France);

Fourteen commercial cables;

140,000 milch cows (this means a decree of death upon thousands of German infants, great numbers of whom have perished from lack of milk already);

The installations of railway lines, and a proportion of rolling stock in the transferred territories.

B—What is Taken from Germany Outside Europe.

The British Empire is finding its purpose in the Great Design of Providence on earth, finding it in this Great War for liberty and for right throughout the world.—Mr. Lloyd George, January 18, 1918.

We to-day are fighting not a war of conquest but a war of liberation.—Mr. Lloyd George, February 12, 1917.

The whole of the German colonies, i.e., Kamerun and Togoland in West Africa, a total of 321,100 square miles; German South-West Africa, 322,450 square miles; German East Africa, 384,180 square miles; Kiauchau in China, 2,002 square miles; Dependencies in the Pacific, 96,160 square miles; viz., a grand total of 1,027,820 square miles. The German colonies enjoyed a total annual trade turn-over of £5½ millions and were potentially of enormous value;

All German rights and titles and all movable and immovable property (see text) pass to the Allies, and all German rights and privileges in China secured under international Treaty are abrogated;

All German State property in China, movable and immovable passes to the Allies, and all German rights and privileges in China secured under international Treaty are abrogated;

German public property in Siam is made over to the Siamese Government;

All the rights secured to Germany under Treaty in Liberia are abrogated;

All German rights, titles, and privileges under international Treaty in Morocco are abrogated; all German movable and immovable property in Morocco, including mining rights, are to be sold by public auction and the proceeds to go to the Moroccan Government, otherwise stated to be French protectorate administration. The German financial interests in the State bank of Morocco are abrogated;

All German Treaty rights in Egypt are abrogated; German property to be treated in the same fashion as in Morocco.

C—Permanent Allied Interference In German Internal Economy.

We are not fighting the German people. . . . It will be a day of rejoicing for the German peasant and artisan when the military caste is broken.—Mr. Lloyd George, September 20, 1914.

Among the innumerable processes of interference in the internal affairs of Germany, designed to cripple Germany's economic rehabilitation, we may note the following:

Germany may not discriminate against Allied trade, but she may be discriminated against (e.g., she can take no steps, for example, to favour her trade with Russia or the Scandinavian countries). Her import tariffs must not be raised, for a period of six months, below the lowest rates of 1914, and in the case of agricultural produce, for a further period of 2½ years. She is not to discriminate in transport charges and facilities against Allied ports, but she is required to make all her own ports, free ports, and to lease areas therein to the Allies. Portions of partly German rivers are internationalised, and there is no provision for German representation on the International Commission.

Germany is to be expelled from representation on the International Commission for the navigation of the Danube, which, in part of its course, is one of the most considerable of German rivers.

She is forbidden to construct canals on the right bank of the Rhine—i.e., in her own territory;

She must grant privileges to France on the right bank of the Rhine for the purpose of setting up engineering works;

She is compelled to construct such parts of the projected Rhine-Meuse canal as pass through her territory;

(As to the object of this canal, see the "U.D.C.," April last.)

She is to accommodate her rolling stock to Allied requirements. Her railway system generally is placed under the supervision of Commissions with a view to facilitating Allied interests; likewise her waterways and ports, and she is generally required to agree to carry out what is demanded of her in these respects (see Section XII.);

The Kiel Canal is to be internationalised;

The German system of internal taxation is to be subject to Allied supervision.

D—The Impositions.

Here, in this strong network of financial obligations imposed on the enemy, we find ourselves in the really solid framework of the Treaty. It is good to pause and consider M. Klotz's (French Finance Minister) subtle, accurately adjusted meshes. After close examination experts will realise that Germany will never escape, even should she attempt to do so, from this terrible network irresistibly maintained by the alliance of the United States and France.—Paris "Figaro."

Until May, 1921, Germany is left in suspense as to the total sum she will be required to pay by way of "reparation." On that date she will be placed under levy, for 30 years, to provide the sum determined upon annually until the total is paid off.

Meanwhile she is to pay:

First charge—The total cost of the armies of occupation from the date of the Armistice as long as they are maintained in German territory;

The sums (unspecified) borrowed by Belgium from the Allies;

One thousand millions sterling in gold, goods, or ships, or other "specific forms of payment," within two years. (This sum is included in a first bond issue of one thousand millions, payable not later than May, 1921, without interest. The cost of the armies of occupation may, at the discretion of the Allies, be deducted);

Four thousand millions (in bond issues).

She is to:

Build within five years one million tons of shipping for the Allies;

Deliver to France annually for ten years an unspecified* amount of coal (Section VIII.);

Give to France the option of acquiring at a fixed price seven million tons of coal annually for ten years; eight million tons to Belgium for the same period; $4\frac{1}{2}$ million tons to Italy in 1919 and in 1920, and thenceforth up to $8\frac{1}{2}$ million tons to the same Power in 1923 and 1924 (in other words, after being deprived of some of her most valuable coalfields, the Allies are to have first call upon her remaining resources);

Give to the "Commission on Dyestuffs and Chemical Drugs" an option to acquire 50 per cent. of the total stocks of these articles (including quinine) in Germany when the Treaty is signed and, up to 1924, the option of acquiring 25 per cent. of the previous year's output.

III.—THE "GUARANTEE."

As a "guarantee" that Germany executes the provisions of this Treaty, the German population west of the Rhine will be subjected to a military occupation by Allied troops for 15 years. If the provisions are faithfully carried out, portions of the territory will be evacuated at the end of five years and ten years respectively.

In the event of the obligations imposed not being carried out "in whole or part," the occupation may be indefinitely prolonged.

If this provision holds good, the result will be the forcible severance of the Rhine Province from Germany, in accordance with the secret Treaty between M. Poincaré and the Tsar [which Mr. Balfour once said did not represent the intentions of the

* Unspecified, i.e., in the summarised version of the Treaty.

French Government], because it is humanly impossible for Germany to fulfil all the "obligations" imposed upon her.

A few days before the publication of this Treaty, which was to free humanity from the scourge of war, I happened to be attending a meeting on quite a different subject. A noble Lord of known Liberal tendencies was speaking, and the opening words of his address betrayed a certain uneasy doubt which it would have been regarded as highly unpatriotic to have given expression to a short while back. He began his speech in this wise: "Some people have opposed the war from the beginning on the ground that it was not what it professed to be, a war of liberation, but a war resulting from greed, jealousy, and imperial ambition. We shall know the truth very soon."

We know it now.

For four years the churches of this land have resounded with prayers for victory. Probably the majority of those who uttered them had but a very vague idea of what they were praying for. Victory for them was the alternative of defeat, and defeat conjured up unimaginable horrors. They could conceive of no half-way house between the two. But in the minds of a minority at least, victory symbolised the triumph of good over evil, a new era for the world, the final liberation of the human race from the deadly pestilence of war. Like Mr. Lloyd George, they saw "peace coming, not a peace which will be a beginning of wars, not a peace which will be an endless preparation for strife and bloodshed, but a real peace in a world that has never had peace before."* So they prayed that their desire might be fulfilled, and as they prayed, they held in their hands a Book in which it is written: "He gave them their desire, and sent leanness into their souls." It is an expressive phrase.

The Massacre of the Innocents.

For five months the Big Four have been squabbling behind closed doors, three of them bent on loot and revenge; the fourth a weak man, as it turns out, really wishful of creating a better world, but inebriated by flattery, infirm of purpose, enveloped from the beginning in that secrecy which he had in advance forsworn, giving way a little here, a little there, until nought remains of his great charter of emancipation, but an institution which only a miracle can now prevent from becoming the greatest engine of arbitrary power the world has ever known. And while thus employed, these representatives of nations claiming to be the most highly civilised on earth, claiming to have waged this war "for the fundamental principles of the Christian faith,"† claiming

* April 6, 1917.

† Mr. Lloyd George, August 20, 1918.

to have contended for the high principles of justice, right and mercy against the forces of entrenched and militant evil—have deliberately consigned tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of innocent and helpless people to death and disease by starvation. From November to the end of March they maintained in full force, and for a portion of that time, even strengthened—despite the repeated protests of their own Commission and, to their everlasting credit, of British officers and soldiers—the most odious and inhumane of all the odious weapons used in the war: the blockade. This murdering and anarchy-breeding process they kept up with their mouths full of pharisaical and unctuous phrases for public consumption, while they snarled over the spoils of victory in private. They banqueted and toasted one another and sang hymns of praise and thanksgiving, while men and women hunted for sustenance amid the offal of great cities, while children perished in heaps for lack of nourishment, patients rotted in over-crowded hospitals, deprived of all necessities through the blockade, and disease stalked blightingly over entire countrysides. And they and their hirelings in the press still dare to talk of “German atrocities” and “German barbarism”! When cant and hypocrisy on a scale so transcendently colossal are in the ascendant, little wonder that a Treaty should be produced which violates every essential principle alleged to have inspired the war—aims of the Allies, and to have justified them in prolonging the war long after it could have been brought to an honourable close.

“National Honour.”

A great deal has been said in this country about “national honour” since August, 1914. Let us examine its applicability to the Treaty of Peace. Not once, but a dozen times, have our statesmen assured us that we were fighting a system and the men who managed it—a system which they called “Prussian militarism”—an irresponsible autocracy, not the people who, they said were constrained to obey it. Not once, but a dozen times, have our rulers asserted that they had no quarrel with the German democracy, that if only the German democracy would assert itself, they would hold out to it the hand of reconciliation. True, when in July, 1917, the German Reichstag by a large majority passed a resolution repudiating aggressive designs and demanding “a peace of understanding and the permanent reconciliation of the peoples,” Mr. Lloyd George totally ignored that significant action in a contemporary speech, and Mr. Balfour ridiculed the idea that the Reichstag had any representative character whatever. But at a later date, and more and more insistently, in order to placate Labour, and under pressure of the unanswerable and unanswered speeches of the Union of Democratic Control and Independent Labour Party leaders in the House, did the Government profess to differentiate between the Autocratic Government of Germany and the German people themselves. More and more pointed

became its invitation to the German people to democratise their institutions as the highway to a speedy and honourable peace. More and more fervid became the protestations of denial that the disruption or destruction of the German political State was sought, or that the economic strangulation of the German nation was among the war aims of this country.

But when the German people overthrew their autocracy, proclaimed themselves a Republic, declared their adherence to the principles of a Peace postulated in advance by President Wilson and accepted by the Allies, and laid down their arms—what happened? We co-operated in forcing upon them Armistice terms of the most humiliating character. They complied with them—they could do no other. We, thereupon, despite the Armistice, continued to starve them—them, the German people be it remembered, not the Kaiser or his fellow Kings, Princes, and Potentates, who had been shown the door—for five long months continued to starve their women and children, tightened the blockade, indeed, by cutting off supplies of fish from the Scandinavian countries. What of our “national honour” then? And now that, distracted, helpless, sick in body, mind, and spirit, we have them down, we thrust this Treaty on them amid a whirlwind of savage taunts and bullying threats, a Treaty which breaks our plighted word, makes a mockery of our professions, a Treaty which strips the new democratic Germany naked, yet demands fabulous sums of it, disrupts and dismembers the German State, expels its citizens from, and confiscates their property in, every part of the globe where we can command events, robs them of the bulk of their merchant and river fleet, places a millstone round their necks, grinds and pulverises them, and would make of them a nation of slaves—this people whom we wished should devote themselves, unhampered by warlords, with all their “strength to the great beneficent tasks of the world.”* What of our national “honour” here? And if they do no sign this pact of shame we tell them, speaking through that sturdy defender of human liberties, Lord Curzon, we tell them—we of the clean hands, the pure hearts, the compassionate minds, the refined and humane sentiments—that we *shall go on starving their women and children*, while we fill our own bellies and pray God to bless our enterprises. Verily we are like to die of a surfeit of “honour.”

The Corroding Lie.

What has come over our people that they tolerate this monstrous affront to the nation's fame? Where are our “liberal” writers and authors who gave their blessings to this war as a decree of providence for the salvation of mankind with ourselves as the active agents of the Almighty? Where is Mr. A. G. Gardiner who told the British people in August 1914 that they were engaged in “fighting for the emancipation of Germany as well as for the

* Mr. Lloyd George, January 18, 1918.

liberties of Europe?" All he can tell the British people to-day is that: "If the Peace terms are the last word we have to say to Germany, let us make up our minds for the inevitable consequence. Let us decently bury the Covenant (of the League of Nations) and prepare for the next war in whatever quarter it may break." True words, but meagre diet for "leanness of soul." Where is Mr. H. G. Wells, who covered men no less honourable than himself with obloquy because, forsooth, they dared to say what they knew to be the truth about the origins and purposes of the war, while he talked at large about the war being a "holy war"—a war "not to destroy a nation but a nest of evil ideas," prated of the "Sword drawn for Peace," of the tremendous opportunity for "Liberalism," of a "conflict of cultures," and all the rest of the cheap clap-trap of the music hall?

Truly does the "Nation" call this Treaty "The Betrayal." Yet it is but the culminating act in a whole series of betrayals, the apotheosis of a sequence of deceptions and falsehoods of which our people have been the chief victims. For they have been lied to systematically and their credulity exploited from the time when Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey, as he was then, solemnly and repeatedly assured the House of Commons that we were under no obligations to France—when they had, in fact, been binding us secretly for years in ever-tightening bonds to support of France and Tsarist Russia, arranging every detail of an Anglo-French military and naval co-operation, lending sums to the Russian despot wherewith to stamp upon the liberties of his subjects, destroy the independence of Persia, increase his armies and his armaments. In that initial lie, and that which it entailed, all the subsequent lies, frauds, intrigues, mis-renderings of facts, exaggerations, inventions, hypocrisies have their origin, their explanation, and their necessity. The lie of a blameless, peaceful world suddenly precipitated into war through the exclusive wickedness and scientific plotting of Germany's rulers. The lies which gathered about the invasion of Belgium, the invasion of Greece, the Secret Treaties, the inception of the blockade weapon, the refusal of the Peace offers, the war with Russia, and all the rest of the foul brood. The Treaty is a fitting sequel to them.

No people ever entered a war with higher ideals than the British people when they entered this war—that is, the section which actually participated in the fighting. It is certainly true of tens of thousands who have been slaughtered in the course of it, that they flung themselves into the fray not because they loved war, but because they hated it. It is certainly true that the President of the Trades Union Congress was expressing the view of British Labour when in September 1916, he declared that "the idea that animated the majority of the five millions who voluntarily enlisted was that they were taking part in a war to end war." It is certainly true that great masses of the working classes supported the Government in resisting pressure to negotiate because they were persuaded into the belief that the Allied terms were

moderate and reasonable and could only be won by a continued expenditure of blood and treasure, and that the continued immolation of the youth of Britain was essential to secure such a settlement as would be an insurance and a guarantee against a renewed visitation of a similar kind. And when President Wilson came along with his magnificent sentiments, his lofty principles, his fervid appeals to justice, magnanimity, unselfishness, there went out to him from our people—as from all the peoples—a tribute as spontaneous as it was unique. He put into words the inarticulate longings of the common people all over the world. He took unto himself and made his own that which humbler men had preached for many weary moons; but in his mouth—he the supreme executive head of a mighty nation—they became the utterances of a prophet proclaiming a new gospel to humanity, a new crusade, war against the institution of war; a crusade to be brought to a triumphant issue in a Peace “openly arrived at,” in a universal decrease in armaments, in self-determination for all peoples, in the mutual trust of all nations, in an impartial justice, a fair settlement, an association of all States linked together in a common bond of union. We may leave President Wilson to his own people and to posterity. Our business is with our own rulers.

The Price of the “Knock-out.”

They have got their knock-out blow. And they have made the Peace which they told us was to bring security to mankind. And this is the world they bequeath to the coming generations:

A democratic Germany disarmed and reduced to vassalage in a ring of armed foes;

Such terms to be exacted of her and imposed upon her as will alone render anything like general disarmament impossible and partial disarmament in the highest degree unlikely;

Where one “Alsace-Lorraine” existed before, a dozen new and more formidable “Alsace-Lorraines” artificially created:

Racial conflicts everywhere intensified;

Millions of men throughout Central Europe arbitrarily thrust into such a position that unless [and this is the only hope for humanity] they can realise a new vision which political frontiers shall no longer obscure, nationalistic prejudices no longer cloud, and capitalistic intrigue no longer efface, they must hate and be hated until the flames of war again leap up from the Rhine to the Carpathians and from the Baltic to the Alps;

Millions of other men caught in the scientifically spun meshes of a commercial and financial net which condemns them to an economic paralysis so complete that self-preservation alone, to say nothing of self-respect, must bid them labour unremittingly to burst through it, to consent to every sacrifice, to husband every ounce of strength, to exhaust every means in what must henceforth be the supreme national task of emancipation from alien thralldom;

The wars of to-morrow—the seeds of them sown broadcast in Europe—and in Asia;

Meantime the war which persists—the war against Russia and Hungary, against the Russian Revolution in the interests of capitalistic Imperialism, the war against an Idea containing within itself a living truth, the solidarity of the toilers of the world.

And to us in particular, and additionally, what heritage of promise has the blind infatuation of successive ministers to make an end of modern Germany at whatever cost by stoking the fires of hatred to such a pitch that common sense and commonprudence would be consumed in them; their secret commitments behind our backs, which lured us on and on to fling fresh batches of our sons into the charnel-house, that the Frenchmen might once more straddle across the Rhine, the Italian extend his Imperial dominion over unwilling peoples, the Russian be forced to mutilate himself for causes remote from his interests and needs; their violation of the altruistic motives by which they claimed to be inspired, when they called the Indian to the valleys of France and the plains of Mesopotamia, conscripted the Egyptian fellahin, bade China plunge into the fray only to leave her defenceless in the grip of Japanese Imperialism; when they showed Persia the door at the Versailles Conference; when they secretly made over Constantinople to the Tsar? Look round the world—read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.

Did we love our country, or did we hate it, those of us who urged it, long before the war, to insist upon wringing the truth from ministers as to our relations with France and Russia; those of us who protested against British interests being identified with French nationalistic and imperial extremism, against British treasure being found for the Tsardom's armies and the Tsardom's persecutions? Did we love our country, or did we hate it, those of us who, when the war broke out, thought that the civilian population could be wisely employed in evolving a national policy which would ensure that the sufferings of our men at the front should not be in vain, and that the follies of past so-called Peace Treaties should not be repeated? Did we love our country, or did we hate it, those of us who warned it that if it did not keep a grip upon the *policy* of the war it would find itself committed to courses altogether alien to its original purposes in entering it? Did we love our country, or did we hate it, those of us who strove to compel ministers to disclose their real aims; those of us who helped to expose and disseminate knowledge of the secret pacts by which ministers had bound us without our knowledge to the attainment of objects diametrically opposed to the objects they claimed to be pursuing; those of us who maintained that the "knock-out blow" would conduct the world, if successful, to a peace of violence and injustice which would be but a prelude to fresh turmoil and would create a state of affairs in Europe and outside it, calculated to imperil the stability of our Empire and fasten the yoke of

militarism more permanently upon our shoulders; those of us who pleaded that a negotiated peace, securing the ends for which public sanction to the war was given, was the path of national wisdom?

As we worked in the true interests of our country while the war was raging, so must we work henceforth to reverse the policy consummated in the Treaty of Versailles; to save the League of Nations, if it can still be saved, from utter shipwreck. The Treaty cannot stand. Whether the Germans sign, or do not sign, matters little in the ultimate resort. Its terms cannot be permanently enforced. We hold it to be morally and physically impossible to keep a civilised people, great in numbers as in courage and resourcefulness, in lasting vassalage. We believe the attempt to do so must complete the downfall of civilisation. We believe that an Empire of the extent and magnitude of our own cannot be held together by brute force, and cannot be managed as a protectionist preserve for British capitalism without involving the nation sooner or later in universal war and ruin. We continue to believe that the principles of the Union of Democratic Control are the only principles which permit of peaceful and fruitful international intercourse. To those principles the statesmen of Britain and of the United States have done homage with their lips. They have betrayed them by their acts—the greater the need that our own efforts should not flag.

Save the Children.

In a cartoon which recently appeared in the "Herald," the "Big Four" are seen emerging from the portals of the Conference, Clemenceau leading. In the corner a small child is crying. Above his head these words are written: "1940 Class." "Curious!"—Clemenceau exclaims—"I seem to hear a child weeping." The cartoon is entitled "Peace and future cannon fodder." There lies our path, open before us. The old men who made this war would lay upon the next generation the burden of their indecent hatreds, their malignant passions, their contemptible egoisms. They would league to posterity their insensate animosities and filthy lusts. The heritage must be repudiated. They have deluded the earth with the blood of the young. To-day they seek to place their reeking hands upon the little children. We must save them from their clutch. A brilliant journalist who has seen the murk and bestiality of this war, wrote awhile since that sooner than his babe asleep in the cradle should endure what he had witnessed our gallant lads endure, he would kill him then and there with his own hands. Near me as I write a child is playing on the grass. His bare limbs glisten in the sunlight. His eyes are sparkling. He springs into the air, stoops to pick a flower, inclines his head to listen to the liquid notes of a willow-wren, is off again, chasing the butterflies with joyful shout. His is the very ecstasy of



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living. He is the embodiment of Hope: the symbol of happiness. Shall I tamely submit to think of him as the pre-destined victim of professional haters in high places? Shall I bow to the decree which would make him in his young manhood a broken, mutilated thing, or stinking carrion on some blood-stained battlefield? He is *my* child, not theirs. What *right* have they to doom him to drag crippled limbs, to grope with sightless eyes, to die an agonising, senseless death? What title theirs to murder *my* child by proxy? Do you not feel the same of your children, and *their* children?

To Save the Children. For men and women of courage and of vision, that is the only thing worth working and striving for in the world to-day.